

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIRUT 15412 201411Z

45

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

USIE-00 DHA-02 OC-05 CCO-00 SY-05 OPR-02 SCCT-01 A-01

SCA-01 OMB-01 ACDA-05 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 /096 W

----- 114831

O R 201154Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7787

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN NY

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK

COMMSIXTHFLT

CTF SIX ZERO

CTF SIX ONE

CTF SIX TWO

CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO

FOSIF ROTA SPAIN

FICEURLANT NORFLOK VA

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIRUT 15412 201411Z

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 15412

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJ: SHIHABI SETS TO WORK IN BEIRUT

REF: BEIRUT 15386 (1402Z)

1. UNANNOUNCED ARRIVAL OF SYRIAN CHIEF OF STAFF SHIHABI DEC 19 AND HIS RAPID-FIRE ROUND OF CONTACTS WITH LEBANESE NOTABLES IS CENTER OF ATTENTION AND CONJECTURE DEC 20. ALTHOUGH SHIHABI ARRIVED HERE WITHOUT PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT, PRESS ACCOUNTS OF HIS TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS SUGGEST THAT HE AVAILED HIMSELF OF THE GOL HELICOPTERS WHICH, AS WE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED, HAVE BEEN STANDING BY FOR THE PAST THREE DAYS TO RECEIVE EXPECTED SYRIAN LUMINARY. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHETHER SHIHABI HAS COME IN LIEU OR IN ADVANCE OF FONMIN KHADDAM, BUT GENERAL CONSENSUS, SHARED BY EMBASSY, IS THAT KHADDAM WILL ARRIVE WHEN DAMASCUS BELIEVES THAT DOMESTIC SITUATION HERE HOLDS REASONABLE PROMISE OF SUCCESS IN BRINGING FACTIONS TOGETHER FOR CONVERSATIONS RATHER THAN CLASHES.

2. SHIHABI HELICOPTERED DIRECTLY TO PRESIDENTIAL PALACE FOR TALKS WITH FRANGIE AND THEN MET DEC 19 WITH OTHER LEADERS, INCLUDING KARAME, GEMAYEL, CHAMOUN, SALAM, YAFI, AND 'ARAFAT. NO TIME LIMIT FOR HIS VISIT HAS BEEN SUGGESTED, BUT HE IS SCHEDULED TO MEET DEC 20 WITH MARONITE PATRIARCH KHREISH AND LEFTIST SPOKESMAN, KAMAL JUMBLATT. SHIHABI HAS BEEN SUPPORTING PRIMIN KARAME IN LATTER'S EFFORTS TO BRING ORDER OUT OF CHAOS AND HAS REPORTEDLY HAD GOOD THINGS TO SAY ABOUT GENAYEL AND HIS READINESS TO CONTRIBUTE TO NATIONAL RECONCILIATION. THIS ATTITUDE WILL DO LITTLE TO MELLOW JUMBLATT IN PREPARATION FOR HIS SESSION WITH SHIHABI TODAY, BUT IF DOMINANT RUMORS ARE ANY INDICATOR, THAT ENCOUNTER MAY HAVE BEEN STORMY IN ANY EVENT.

3. EMBOFF RECEIVED EVENING DEC 19 FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF PHALANGE VIEW OF SYRIAN GAME-PLAN FOR LEBANON. SOURCE TALKED DEC 13 WITH KARIM PAKRADOUNI OF PHALANGE POLITBURO, CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIRUT 15412 201411Z

WHO SAID GEMAYEL AND SYRIANS AGREED DURING FORMER'S BRIEF VISIT TO DAMASCUS ON THREE-STAGE STRATEGY:

(A) IMPLEMENTATION OF TRULY EFFECTIVE CEASFIRE;

(B) EXPANSION OF CABINET TO EMBRACE REPS OF PHALANGE AND JUMBLATT; AND,

(C) IMPLEMENTATION OF MINOR, LARGELY COMETIC, REFORMS IN PERIOD OF FRANGIE'S INCUMBENCY, WITH MORE GENERAL RESOLUTION OF CRISIS TO FOLLOW ELECTION OF NEW PRESIDENT.

PAKRADOUNI ADMITTED THAT CLASHES, WHICH WERE CONTINUING AT TIME OF HIS EXPOSITION, HAD COMPLICATED SITUATION ENORMOUSLY AND PROBABLY DELAYED POSSIBILITY OF CABINET EXPANSION UNTIL MID TO LATE-JANUARY 1976. HE SAID STEPS ENVISAGED IN STEP (C) WERE OCCASIONED BY GENERAL BELIEF THAT NO REAL SOLUTION WAS POSSIBLE SO LONG AS FRANGIE PERCHED ON THE HILL AND THAT PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS SLATED FOR APRIL PROBABLY COULD NOT BE HELD (HE WAS NOT CLEAR THAT SYRIANS AGREED WITH LATTER POINT). ACCORDING TO PAKRADOUNI, THIS PLAN WOULD BE CARRIED OUT BY AD HOC COALITION CONSISTING OF SYRIANS (AND THEIR LEBANESE RESOURCES), PHALANGE, PLO/FATAH "MODERATES", WHO KNOWS PAKRADOUNI, IS ATTEMPTING TO SEE HIM PRIOR TO CHRISTMAS TO DETERMINE HIS VIEWS ON SITUATION IN WAKE SHIHABI VISIT.

4. JUMBLATT MEANWHILE IS QUOTED BY PRESS DEC 20 AS HAVING ADRESSED MEMBERS DEC 19 OF "VICTORIOUS" PSP MILITIA AND TOLD THEM THAT LEBANON WAS MERELY AT THE BEGINNING OF A SETTLEMENT, WHICH WOULD TAKE TWO OR THREE MONTHS. THIS IS PROBABLY THE MOST UPBEAT STATEMENT, IF TRUE, FROM JUMBLATT RECENTLY AND RAISES QUESTION AS TO FACTORS BEHIND JUMBLATT'S NEW-FOUND OPTIMISM. IBRAHIM QULAYLAT IS PICTURED IN MANY PAPERS RECEIVING DELEGATION FROM ARMENIAN TASHNAQ PARTY--ANOTHER SIGN THAT HE HAS ARRIVED ON THE POLITICAL SCENE. HIS HEADQUARTERS ISSUED YESTERDAY STATEMENT ASSERTING THAT LEBANESE CRISIS COULD ONLY BE SOLVED BY POLITICAL PROCESS. RUMORS CURRENT IN LEBANESE CAPITAL FEATURE PROMINENTLY REPORT THAT QULAYLAT'S "MURABITOUN", WHICH FOUGHT ALONG SIDE COMMUNISTS AND JUMBLATTIS IN SECOND BATTLE OF THE HOTELS, WERE "PURCHASED" DEC 14 WITH SAUDI CASH DURING MEETING AT HOME OF NASSIB SABBAGH, A PALESTINIAN CAPITALIST WHO HAS BEEN QUITE ACTIVE RECENTLY. EMBOFF HAS RECEIVED CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 BEIRUT 15412 201411Z

OVER LAST SEVERAL DAYS, EYEWITNESS REPORT (MEMORANDUM BEING SENT DEPT) SUPPORTING BELIEF THAT, DESPITE SOUND AND FURY, PHALANGISTS SUFFERED VERY LITTLE IN RECENT CLASHES AROUND HOTELS.

5. ALTHOUGH POLITICAL AREAN ATTRACTS MOST ATTENTION DEC 20, BUTCHER'S BILL IN BEIRUT AND ELSEWHERE CONTINUES TO MOUNT, ALBEIT AT SLOWER PACE THAN PREVIOUSLY. HEAVY CLASHES WERE HEARD BEGINNING AT 1000 HOURS BETWEEN SHIYAH AND AIN EL-RUMANNEH AND EQUALLY NOISY FIGHTING OCCURRED BEGINNING AT 0130 HOURS DEC 20 IN VICINITY OF KUWAITI EMBASSY AND CITE SPORTIVE. LEBANESE SECURITY SOURCE HAS INFORMED DATT THAT AT LEAST PORTION OF THIS CONTRETEMPS WAS RELATED TO PFLP-GC ASSAULT ON ALGERIAN CHANCERY, WITH ARMY HAVING CAPTURED ONE AND ALGERIAN GUARDS TWO OF

JIBRIL'S MINIONS. SEEMS SAFE TO ASSUME, HOWEVER, THAT INCIDENTS THAT CLOSE TO MAIN SABRA/SHATILA REFUGEE CAMP BROUGHT AT MINIMUM CAMP MILITIA QUICKLY ONTO SCENE. BEIRUT IS QUIET AS OF 1200 HOURS DEC 20, BUT GOL SECURITY SOURCES WARN THAT NO ROADS ARE SAFE, PARTICULARLY IN AIN MREISSEH AND SHIYAH/AIN EL-RUMANNEH REGIONS.

6. TRIPOLITANIANS REPORTEDLY CONTINUE BATTLE ZGHORTAWIS, NO CURRENT DETAILS ARE AVAILABLE. AMERICAN NEWSMAN WHO VISITED TRIPOLI DEC 19 REPORTS THAT FAROUK MUQADDAM REIGNS SUPREME IN NORTHERN CITY AND IS DETERMINED THAT LEBANESE ARMY WILL NEVER RETURN TO TRIPOLI. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, MUQADDAM SPOKE HIGHLY OF PFLP ELEMENTS IN NORTH, BUT CASTIGATED PFLP-GC SEVERELY, INDICATING THAT HE MIGHT EVENTUALLY ELIMINATE THE LATTER. DETAILS OF JOURNALISTS COMMENTS WILL BE SUBMITTED BY MEMO. ZAHLE IS REPORTED TO BE RELATIVELY CALM ALTHOUGH PRESS SUGGESTS THAT BAALBEK IS ONCE AGAIN BUBBLING. NORTH METN AREA APPEARS TO HAVE BECOME NEW BATTLE FRONT AS PHALANGE AND PPS APPARENTLY SQUARE OFF IN MINOR AFFRAYS.

7. EMBASSY TELEPHONE LINES MIRACULOUSLY COME TO LIFE MORNING DEC 20 FOR FIRST TIME IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS.

8. EMBASSY HAS JUST BEEN INFORMED THAT QASSIM AL 'IMAD, GOVERNOR OF NORTH LEBANON, WAS ASSASSINATED AT HIS HOME
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 BEIRUT 15412 201411Z

IN TRIPOLI AT ABOUT 1030 THIS MORNING. HIS ASSAILANTS ARE NOT YET IDENTIFIED AND THEIR AFFILIATION WILL BE A KEY FACTOR IN DETERMINING POSSIBLE REPERCUSSIONS. (IMAD WAS A DRUZE.
GODLEY

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, CIVIL DISORDERS, VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 20 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BEIRUT15412
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750443-0484
From: BEIRUT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19751222/aaaaatfm.tel
Line Count: 206
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BEIRUT 15386
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 MAY 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 MAY 2003 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <30 SEP 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHIHABI SETS TO WORK IN BEIRUT
TAGS: PINS, PINT, LE, (SHIHABI, HIKMAT)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006